

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY SERGEANTS MAJOR ACADEMY  
Fort Bliss, Texas 79918-8002

USASMA Circular  
No. 350-03-1

**TRAINING**  
SERGEANTS MAJOR NONRESIDENT COURSE  
POLICY, PROCEDURES, AND GRADING STANDARDS

1. **PURPOSE.** To publish the policies and procedures of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA) Sergeants Major Nonresident Course (SMNRC).

2. **APPLICABILITY.** This circular applies to all SMNRC students enrolled at USASMA.

3. **REFERENCES.**

- a. AR 350-41, Training in Units
- b. AR 351-1, Individual Military Education and Training
- c. AR 600-9, The Army Weight Control Program
- d. AR 623-1, Academic Evaluation Reporting System
- e. USASMA MEMO 350-1, Graduation Standards

4. **CLASS FACILITATOR (CF).** The CF is the student's primary point of contact for all course issues. Besides the Student Portal, the SMNRC web site lists the telephone numbers and E-mail addresses used to contact the entire course staff. All CFs will provide assistance regarding student and general course matters.

5. **PHASE COMPLETION.** SMNRC is a 2-year course consisting of the following two phases:

a. Phase I is the Nonresident Studies Phase consisting of six modules and is accomplished through the Student Portal application (see item 9 below for Testing Procedures regarding the end of module examinations).

b. Phase II is the resident phase conducted each year in June at Fort Bliss, Texas.

6. **ACCELERATED STUDIES COMPLETION.** Students may accelerate ("fast track") their studies and graduate in one year. However, in order to do so, students must significantly increase their pace of study, course work and testing to meet the one-year track timelines (see item 10 below).

7. **ON-LINE LESSON EVALUATION.** Each module consists of seven to eleven lessons. Each lesson has an online lesson evaluation that must be successfully completed (students must attain at least 70 percent to receive a "GO" for all on-line lesson evaluations). Students achieving less than 70 percent will redo the lesson evaluation until they attain a passing score. **NOTE: Students will not take the end-of-module (EOM) exam until all On-line lesson evaluations have been successfully completed for that Module.**

8. **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND ORAL PRESENTATIONS.** Students will complete the following written assignments and oral presentations: lessons C501 (Army Writing Style), C500-C (Techniques of Military Briefings and Presentations), L500 (History of the NCO), N512 (International Strategy and Foreign Policy) and N513 (National Security Affairs Briefing).

9. **TESTING PROCEDURES.**

a. Students must successfully complete each EOM examination, in sequential order, during the nonresident phase of the course. The EOM examination validates the student's knowledge of the material presented in modules 1 through 6.

b. Only a Test Control Officer (TCO) on duty appointment orders, or an authorized test examiner from a local Military Education Center (MEC), will administer the EOM examinations. The TCO must be an officer (warrant or commissioned) appointed on orders locally. Enlisted personnel are not authorized to administer SMNRC examinations. This includes civilian personnel who hold National Guard or Reserve enlisted positions (this criteria also pertains to test examiners at the MEC). USASMA will verify each TCO through receipt of TCO/test examiners orders and by making contact with each to authenticate their existence, contact addresses (mailing and email) and telephone numbers. Ref. C-2

c. Once verified, USASMA will preposition an examination compact disk (CD) to the TCO or MEC containing all EOM exams. Each CD contains detailed instructions and procedures on how to complete the EOM examinations and the TCO/test examiner's responsibility for the proper administration of all test materials. Each student must contact their TCO or local MEC to ensure that they have received the examination CD (TCO/MEC will normally receive the exam within 30 days verification by USASMA).

d. Students who successfully complete the on-line lesson evaluation exercises for each module will contact their CF to receive authorization to test the EOM exam (**again, the EOM exam will only be authorized in sequential order and only after a successful grade of the previous EOM exam has been posted to the student's academic record**). After the CF has sent authorization to the TCO/test examiner, the student will contact the TCO to coordinate a test date and time. Students must take the examination within 15 days of authorization by the CF (waivers of this requirement is determined by

the TCO/test examiner's availability to administer the EOM exam or student mission conflicts).

e. USASMA will not authorize a TCO/test examiner to administer EOM examinations out of order. If an examination is received without proper authorization from SMNRC, the examination is invalidated. The CF will immediately call the TCO/test examiner to re-emphasize their responsibilities per their instructions. Note: Any violations of the EOM exam instructions will cause USASMA to reconsider allowing the TCO/test examiner to further test USASMA-related materials.

f. The EOM exam is a multiple-choice, closed book test. Students will not use references or other training aids that relate to the EOM material being tested.

g. TCOs will mail the EOM exam material in the most expeditious manner possible to USASMA (Certified with receipt). Students should wait at least 2 weeks for their academic progress to be updated through their Student Portals. This allows for postal service delivery, grading and posting of the exam results.

h. Students will retest if they receive less than 70 percent on any EOM examination. The student's CF will contact the student and inform them of the EOM failure. The CF and student will go over the examination results to ensure they focus on the specific areas from which the questions are drawn (TLOs/ELOs). Once the CF is satisfied the student fully understands the lesson material, they will then issue the student's TCO the retest material and authorize the retest.

i. **Failure of the retest will result in dismissal proceedings for lack of academic progress.**

10. **ACCELERATED GRADUATION PROGRESS.** SMNRC students have the opportunity to graduate early by accelerating their nonresident studies. This allows students to exercise initiative and aids them in achieving professional goals. Students desiring to attend the resident phase prior to the two-year schedule must complete all six nonresident modules prior to 28 February of the first year. Advance commitment is not a requirement. Note: The availability of classroom space and other USASMA resources determine selection for early attendance to the resident phase.

11. **PHYSICAL TRAINING AND APPEARANCE POLICY (PTAP).** The objective of the PTAP is to ensure each student meets current Army standards and has a thorough understanding of AR 350-41 and AR 600-9 prior to graduation from the Sergeants Major Course (SMC).

a. As part of initial enrollment into SMNRC, each student must meet the height and weight standards of AR 600-9. Students accomplish this by using the certification form found in Annex D of this publication. A commissioned officer (company level or above) within the student's chain of command must verify this information. **Note:**

**EOM examinations will not be authorized until SMNRC receives this information.**

b. During the two-week resident phase, USASMA will verify the student's height and weight. Those students who do not meet the standards of AR 600-9 will be denied enrollment into the resident phase. USASMA will also administer the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) within the first week of arrival to Fort Bliss. Passing the APFT is a graduation requirement.

**12. STUDENT DISMISSAL POLICY.** Students who do not meet course academic standards, who are denied enrollment into the resident phase for not meeting the height and weight standards of AR 600-9 or fail to pass the APFT during the resident phase, can expect dismissal action from the Sergeants Major Course. Additionally, as part of the dismissal process, an Academic Evaluation Report (AER, DA Form 1059) reflecting a rating of "Failed to Achieve Course Standards" in the performance summary block will be issued to the student and a copy forwarded to the appropriate NCOES branch for administrative processing. The Academy may dismiss students for any of the following reasons:

a. **Lack of academic progress.** Students that fall behind the scheduled module completion dates are subject to the following actions:

(1) One Module behind (student falls into a "Red" status), a Memorandum of Concern and academic progress report is sent by the CF to the student's first and/or second line CSMs informing them of their soldier's change of academic status (student receives a courtesy copy of the action).

(2) Forty-five days after the CSM Memo of Concern is sent and the student has not caught up (still in "Red" status), student is placed on Academic Probation (AP). An AP packet consisting of a Memorandum of Concern from the course chief and the student's academic report is sent to the student and another is sent to the student's first and second line CSMs. Students will have 30 days to contact their CF and put together a feasible plan of action in getting caught up (back into "Green" status). Note: Once a student is placed on AP, regardless if they go back into a "Green" status, LOPD action will be taken if they should fall behind the course schedule again.

(3) Thirty days after the AP packet is sent and no plan of action has been approved by USASMA. Once the plan of action is approved and student fails to meet the specific deadlines laid out in the plan, the student can expect a LOPD action taken against them.

b. **Academic Progress Deadlines.** A student is subject to lack of progress dismissal (LOPD) for failing to meet the following academic progress deadlines:

**START DATE: 1 APRIL 03**

- (1) Module 1 within 4 months of the start date (31 Jul 03).
- (2) Module 2 within 8 months of the start date (30 Nov 03).
- (3) Module 3 within 12 months of the start date (31 Mar 04).
- (4) Module 4 within 16 months of the start date (31 Jul 04).
- (5) Module 5 within 20 months of the start date (30 Nov 04).
- (6) Module 6 by 28 Feb of the scheduled graduation year.

c. **Academic failure.** A student is subject to dismissal for failure of both the primary and retest examinations for any module.

d. **Plagiarism.** A student is subject to dismissal for appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, or thoughts of another person without giving credit to the original author. **You may not use another student's work as a reference.** Students should use source documents (published books and articles) for research. Information used in students's written or oral response must be in their own words. The student may not copy directly from supplemental readings or other source documents. Additionally, the student must identify the source document. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. Any time a CF, FA or fellow student suspect's plagiarism on the part of any student they are obligated to report their suspicions to the SMNRC Chief who will conduct an investigation and determine if the alleged plagiarism is factual. Verified cases of plagiarism will result in dismissal from the course.

e. **Appeal process.** In accordance with AR 351-1, para 5-30,c.(3)(d), any student dismissed from the course may appeal their dismissal in writing through the USASMA Commandant to Commander, USAADAC and Ft. Bliss, TX for review of their case based on exceptional and substantial reasons. Final dismissal appeal authority for SMC students is the general court martial convening authority (Commander, USAADAC), Ft. Bliss, TX.

13. **STUDENT DISENROLLMENT POLICY.** IAW AR 351-1, para 5-23 (1), all requests for administrative disenrollment, for any reason, must have endorsements from the student's chain of command and proponent. Active Component students must submit their requests to NCOES Branch, PERSCOM; Army Reserve students through AR-PERSCOM, ATTN: ARPC-PLT-S, 1 Reserve Way, St Louis, MO 63132-5200; To the Commandant USASMA. National Guard students through NCOES Branch, NGB-ARO-TI; To Commandant USASMA. USASMA will return, without action, any request received without proper endorsements. **Note: Students who have an LOPD or other adverse actions pending I.E. plagiarism, failure to meet Army standards, etc., will not be allowed administrative disenrollment**

under this paragraph (they will continue with the dismissal process to its conclusion).

14. **APPROVED RETIREMENT.** USASMA will administratively disenroll students who receive approved retirement orders. Students retiring into the Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR) or USAR Control Group (Reinforced) may continue in the course but must receive approval from the NCOES Branch, ARPERSCOM, ATTN: ARPC-PLT-S, 1 Reserve Way, St Louis, MO 63132-5200.

15. **COMPLETION SCHEDULE EXTENSIONS and DEFERMENTS.**

a. **Extensions** - If students cannot meet the required completion date per the module completion schedule, they may request an extension from their CF for that module but only for exceptional cases. Students must show that circumstances beyond their control prevented them from achieving minimum academic progress. These circumstances must be of a temporary nature and cannot impede future progress.

b. **DEFERMENTS** - Students, who for some reason beyond their control, cannot attend the resident phase of their scheduled graduation year, may submit a request for deferment through their chain of command, to the Commandant of USASMA. Regular Army (RA) students must submit their requests through their chain of command to NCOES Branch, PERSCOM for approval. This request must be submitted and approved prior to the start of the resident phase. **Note: Any deferment request sent directly to the USASMA that does not follow the procedures above will be returned without action.**

16. **STUDENT EVALUATION SYSTEM.**

a. **Student evaluation process.** The student evaluation system is a process of assessing each student using the "whole person" concept, culminating with the submission of an Academic Efficiency Report (AER). It is both an objective and subjective process arrived at by performance evaluations, examinations, observations, comparison and analysis. It involves input from both the student's CF for the nonresident phase and the faculty advisors (FA) during the resident phase. The student's FA is responsible for compiling and reporting the total assessment on the AER.

b. **Grading.** Grading is based on a "GO/NO GO" concept. A "GO" rating means the student demonstrated competency in the evaluated skill and met the established standards. All ratings will be justified on the AER.

c. **CF/FA Duties and Responsibilities.**

(1) Course Facilitator (CF). CFs assist students in meeting course requirements. Teaching, coaching and mentoring the student are their primary mission. CFs counsel and advise the student in all evaluated areas including written communication, oral communication,

research ability, physical fitness and weight control standards. The CF counsels students on any "NO GO" performance during Modules 1 through 6 to identify the student's problem areas. The CFs monitor progress on the self-paced requirements in Modules 1 through 6 and submit a SMNRC Academy Evaluation Report Summary Sheet, on each of their students IAW this Circular.

(2) Faculty Advisor (FA). FAs counsel and assist students on their contribution to group work and the academic curriculum during the resident phase. FAs report student absences through their senior instructors (SI) using the Absentee Report, FB 0379f. The FA counsels students on any "NO GO" performance during the resident phase to identify the student's problem areas. The FA is responsible for any additional training the student may require while a member of that group in the resident phase. Additionally, they counsel and assist students who fail to maintain a minimum score of 70% on examinations and SMNRC Academy Evaluation Report Summary Sheet. Finally, FAs input the overall evaluation into the appropriate rated blocks of the student's AER (DA Form 1059), signs it and counsels each student on its final result.

c. **Special Evaluation Credit Report (SECR)**. USASMA staff and faculty (S&F) members may submit to the student's FA appropriate documentation (formal statement, General Counseling Form, Memorandum for Record, etc.) whenever they observe a student's other than satisfactory behavior and/or performance (unsatisfactory/superior). **Note: Unprofessional behavior and misconduct during the resident phase will result in a less than satisfactory rating for leadership on the AER. Additionally, students are also subject to actions under UCMJ for serious cases of misconduct and unprofessional behavior.**

d. **ACADEMY EVALUATION REPORT SUMMARY SHEET (AERSS)**.

(1) The SMNRC forms handbook maintained by each CF contains sample forms and detailed instructions for completing them. The Course Chief and Trainer will update these forms and instructions at the beginning of each class.

(2) To ensure consistency of ratings among course instructors, below contains criteria to assist them in determining ratings used on all student evaluations.

(3) The CF and FA use this to document the overall evaluation of a student's performance during the Nonresident and Resident phase. The guidelines below assist CF/FAs when preparing the AERSS. This provides the basis for the 1059.

e. **CRITERIA**.

(1) Written Communication.

(a) The CF evaluates the student's written communication ability based on the student's performance in the Army Writing Program on the lesson evaluation (LE).

(b) The CF gives a superior rating to a student who receives a first time "GO" with a score of 90% or higher on all of the three LEs. A superior rating cannot be given if the student received an UNSAT in any area.

(c) The CF gives a satisfactory rating to a student who scores at least 70% on each of the three graded LEs. Scoring less than 70% on any requirement requires a rewrite, which can only get a satisfactory score.

(d) The CF gives an unsatisfactory rating to a student who requires more than one rewrite (i.e., scores less than 70% on both the initial LE and the rewrite/retest) on two or more of the three graded LEs.

(2) Oral Communication

(a) The CF/FA evaluates the student's overall speaking ability during Phase I and II. Speaking ability includes any oral communication other than the formally graded presentations completed by the FA (see para 5 below).

(b) The FA gives a superior rating to a student who demonstrates superb communication ability during daily group interactions.

(c) The CF/FA gives an unsatisfactory rating to any student who demonstrates unsatisfactory oral communication skills and/or uses profanity in daily interactions.

(d) The FA evaluates the National Security Affairs Certification Briefing and the Information Brief. These evaluations are separate from the daily oral communications evaluation for the SECR. Your CSM/SGM will use FB Form 1983 (Oral Presentation Evaluation) for the NCO History journal article and Graduation Speech. Students must send original evaluation sheet to the NRC. FAs use the national security affairs worksheet for the NSA briefing. CF/FAs will make sure students are knowledgeable of the standards for all briefings during the base lessons for the briefings. The lesson materials contain the standards for each briefing.

(3) Leadership Skills. Students' leadership skills will only be evaluated in cases where their actions or conduct warrant a less than satisfactory (UNSAT) rating. The FA will evaluate this area when students fail to meet the standards in one or more of the following areas:

(a) The CF/FA relieves a student from a leadership position.



(b) The student consistently demonstrates the inability to follow instructions.

(c) The student fails to attend or participate in group or Academy functions.

(d) Unacceptable personal and professional conduct by a student, i.e., DUI/DWI, fails the APFT, fails to meet body fat standards, misconduct, etc.

(e) Plagiarizes someone else's work.

(4) Contribution to Group Work. (Section IV, SECR). Group work includes the group process of establishing norms, setting goals, group cohesiveness, and open communication.

(a) The FA evaluates this area during the resident phase. The student is given a superior rating for those who make significant contributions on a regular basis, by thorough preparation for class, by exceptional participation in group discussions, and maintenance of appropriate group functional behavior.

(b) The FA gives a satisfactory rating to students who read their assignments, prepares for class, participate, and makes meaningful contributions to the group.

(c) The FA gives an unsatisfactory rating to a student who does not read their assignments, fails to prepare for class, does not participate, or does not make any meaningful contributions to the group. An unsatisfactory rating will also be given to any student displaying inappropriate behavior on a continuous basis.

(5) Research Ability.

(a) The CF/FA will evaluate the student's research ability based on research material they provide in Phase I and II. The evaluated research lessons are N512, L500, N500. This lesson will be completed prior to arriving at the resident phase and turned into the FA. L500 is the NCO History journal article (Phase I) and N500 is the NSA Certification Briefing (Phase II). NSA briefing requirements are in lesson N513. The CF gives a superior rating to a student who receives superior ratings on all research requirements.

(b) Students receive a satisfactory rating if they achieve a satisfactory for their research on two out of three requirements. Students that receive an unsatisfactory twice on any one lesson, will not be able to redo that lesson again. Their rating for that lesson will be an UNSAT. Students must also receive at least a SAT on the NSA Brief.

(c) The CF gives an overall unsatisfactory rating to a student who receives an unsatisfactory rating on two or more UNSATs on the three evaluated areas.

**g. Service School Academic Evaluation Report Rating Guidelines (DA Form 1059).**

(1) The SMNRC Chief will provide a timetable for completion of the AER for each class. **Note: All students require a completed AER, regardless of whether or not they completed the course.**

(2) The CF will support block 13 (performance summary) with the final ratings from the AERSS which will also appear in block 14 (demonstrated abilities).

(3) Exceeded Course Standards. **This is limited to no more than 20% of the class.** The CF may give this evaluation to a student who consistently demonstrated superior competence. The student must receive a superior rating in all of the four rated areas from block 14, receive a "GO" and superior the first time on all assignments and examinations, pass the APFT, and consistently display superior military appearance and bearing.

(4) Achieved Course Standards. The CF gives this evaluation to a student who completed the course in a satisfactory manner and does not meet the criteria in USASMA Memo 623-1, paras 2-7c, 2-7e, or 2-7f.

(5) Marginally Achieved Course Standards. The CF gives this evaluation to those students who achieve only minimum acceptable course standards. Substandard performance may include, but is not limited to, the failure of two or more examinations, marginal writing ability evidenced by performance in the Army writing style, poor oral communication skills, APFT failure, enrollment into the overweight program, counseling required on individual qualities/traits expected of a senior noncommissioned officer, or an unsatisfactory rating in any graded area in block 14 of the AER.

(6) Failed to Achieve Course Standards. The CF gives this evaluation to those students who fail to meet the minimum course standards as prescribed in USASMA Memorandum 350-3. These include, but are not limited to, academic performance, physical fitness, and conduct/discipline.

**h. Review of Marginal Evaluations.** The Course Chief reviews all AERs and associated documentation to ensure CF/FA compliance with rating guidance.

**i. Referred Reports.** The SMNRC Chief processes a referred report in accordance with AR 623-1, Academic Evaluation Reporting System. The Commandant will use a memorandum (See Annex A, Sample Memorandum For Referred Report), to refer the AER to the student when it contains:

(1) Any report with the following ratings:

- (a) An unsatisfactory rating.
- (b) A "Marginally Achieved Course Standards" response.
- (c) A "Failed to Achieve Course Standards" response.
- (d) A "NO" response in block 15.
- (e) "Fail" for failing the APFT retest.
- (f) "NO" for height and weight, indicating noncompliance with AR 600-9.

(g) When in the opinion of the reviewing officer, the report contains comments so derogatory that it will have an adverse impact on the student's career.

j. **Student Release.** Students released from the academy at any time during the course will receive a rating on DA Form 1059 as follows:

(1) Block 13 (performance summary).

(a) No requirement exists for marking blocks for students administratively dismissed from the course.

b) Students dismissed from the course will receive "Failed to achieve course standards." See USASMA Memo 623-1, para 2-7f.

(2) Block 14 (demonstrated abilities). Evaluation possible, dependent upon time frame student released, i.e., first month vs eighteenth month.

(3) Block 15 (academic potential). Has the student demonstrated the academic potential for selection to higher-level schooling/training? This block is self-explanatory. This portion of the evaluation strictly addresses the student's academic potential for other schooling/training. A rating of "NO" constitutes a referred report and comments must be specific and fully explained in block 16. See USASMA Memo 623-1, para 2-10. Use "N/A" only if the evaluation is not possible which is dependent upon the time frame the student is released.

(4) Block 16 (comments).

(a) A statement explaining the reason for student's release.

(b) A statement that item 14 does not apply to the report (except in cases of academic failure, where comments must support the unsatisfactory ratings in item 14).

17. **COURSE RECOGNITION.** Recognition for graduating the SMC is as follows:

- a. USASMA awards the student a diploma.
- b. AR 640-2-1 and NGR 640-2-1 require annotation on the student's DA Form 2A and DA Form 2-1 (Personnel Qualification Record) to show completion of the SMC.
- c. National Guard and Army Reserve NCOs, not on extended active duty, will receive credit hours at the rate of one point for each three credit hours of nonresident course instruction satisfactorily completed (NGR 640-1/AR 140-185).
- d. Graduates of the SMC will receive equal consideration with resident course graduates in all personnel management actions.
- e. The "Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services" recommends that a graduate of the SMNRC receive college level credit. The academic standards and evaluations performed by the student determine the amount of credit given by the accrediting college or university.

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\* This circular supersedes USASMA Circular 350-01-1, dated 13 February 2001.

**The proponent for this circular is the Sergeants Major Nonresident Course. Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) to Commandant, USASMA, ATTN: ATSS-BAC, Fort Bliss, TX 79918-8002.**

//original signed//  
MICHAEL D. ENNEKING  
COL, FA  
Commandant

**DISTRIBUTION:**  
Class 30 [[usasma.bliss.army.mil/nrc](mailto:usasma.bliss.army.mil/nrc)]

ANNEX A (SAMPLE MEMORANDUM FOR REFERRED AERs) to USASMA CIR 350-03-1

ATSS-C

(Date)

MEMORANDUM FOR MSG John Doe, 012-34-5678, Student, Class #\_\_\_\_, USA NRSMC,  
USA Sergeants Major Academy, Ft Bliss, TX 79918-8002

SUBJECT: Letter of Transmittal

The enclosed Academic Evaluation Report (DA Form 1059) is referred to you for your acknowledgement and information. You have the option of submitting a statement in your behalf in accordance with AR 623-1, paragraph 1-13c. Comments or statements do not constitute an appeal. Appeals are filed and processed separately as outlined in AR 623-205.

EIYE M. JEFE  
COL, CM  
Commandant

ATSS-STU 1st End  
978-8619

B.Bradford/blb/DSN

MSG John Doe, USA NRSMC, USA Sergeants Major Academy,  
Ft Bliss, TX 79918-8002 DATE:\_\_\_\_\_

FOR Commandant, USA Sergeants Major Academy, Ft Bliss, TX 79918-8002

I acknowledge receipt of the Academic Evaluation Report and:

- a. elect not to make a statement.\_\_\_\_\_  
(initials)
- b. submit the attached statement in my behalf.\_\_\_\_\_  
(initials)

JOHN DOE  
MSG, USA

A-1